



## Facts about the National Marine Sanctuary Proposed Draft Management Plan

On October 21, 2011 NOAA released a comprehensive draft management plan and environmental assessment for Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary in American Samoa. The new draft plan describes the sanctuary's goals and guiding principles, regulations and boundaries, and guides future activities. It sets priorities and performance measures for resource protection, research and education programs. The draft plan also proposes the addition of five new marine areas: Fogama'a / Fagalua (Larsen Bay), waters around Swains Island and Muliiva, also known as Rose Atoll, and some of the waters around Aunu'u Island and Ta'u Island.

Based upon some of the comments we have received thus far, we are providing some clarifying facts.

**① None of the proposed sanctuary units are on land.** Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary is not proposing any changes on land. The sanctuary's proposal will not affect people's access to their land, nor would the sanctuary have access across people's land.

**② Most new units allow fishing.** Most of the proposed areas allow fishing. Only Fagatele Bay and the research area near Aunu'u have been proposed for no fishing, and Fogama'a/ Fagalua (Larsen Bay) has been proposed as only hook and line fishing.

A 2008 study based on interviews with 78 elder fishermen throughout Tutuila and the Manu'a Islands showed that 60 percent of the fishermen thought the quality of American Samoa reef fishing had gotten worse (fewer fish, more effort to catch them) since they were young. The sanctuary's proposals are intended to help ensure the reef remains healthy and productive for generations to come so that this generation won't have to say the same thing to their grandchildren.

The sanctuary welcomes specific comments on how the proposed fishing regulations can be improved.

### What are some Sanctuary accomplishments to date?

- A monitoring program for the bay began in 1985 and is one of the longest coral reef monitoring data sets in American Samoa.
- According to the 2011 Biogeographic Assessment of the Samoan Archipelago, coral cover and richness in Fagatele Bay are relatively higher compared to all of American Samoa, and fish richness values are much higher.
- In 2010 FBNMS partnered with ASDOC and ASDOE to provide a unique professional development opportunity to over 140 elementary and high school teachers from both public and private schools in American Samoa. The two-day workshop offered engaging and innovative activities that teachers can bring to their classrooms and extend students' learning regarding the marine environment.
- In 2011 FBNMS finalized a Grant to bring a hyperbaric chamber to American Samoa to provide necessary medical treatments for the local community, possibly reducing the number of diabetes-related amputations, while simultaneously providing for emergency treatment of injuries related to diving. The chamber could also serve to increase dive-related tourism within the territory.
- The Sanctuary is promoting marine education and the Territory through innovative methods such as the interpretive kiosks placed at LBJ Hospital and the airport. The Sanctuary is also developing a visitor's center designed to be the premier marine educational, outreach and learning facility in the Territory. FBNMS expects this to open in 2012.
- FBNMS and ASDOC have sponsored Bruckner Chase to conduct swimming awareness classes and to highlight the importance of teaching the Territory's youth about swimming, ocean awareness and safety, and marine conservation.
- FBNMS facilitated the *Bruckner Chase Toa ole Tai* program to train a select group of American Samoan youth each year to become peer educators and mentors in their communities, providing instruction to other youth in how to safely be in and around the ocean.

**③ The public was actively involved in the planning process from the beginning.** Since 2009, the American Samoa Department of Commerce (ASDOC) and Sanctuary staff have worked closely on the proposal with the Office of Samoan Affairs (OSA), the Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC), the Governor's Coral Reef Advisory Group, and the public.

Three public scoping meetings were held in 2009 to identify a broad range of issues and concerns related to management of the sanctuary.

A dozen SAC meetings or SAC Working group meetings have been held to help refine issues and provide direction for management actions. All SAC meetings are open to the public, and public notice is given prior to each meeting. The SAC

Working Groups, including the Site Selection Working Group, were composed of experts from local and federal resource agencies and sanctuary staff.

On numerous occasions Sanctuary staff briefed the meetings of the OSA, which included District Governors, County Chiefs, Village Mayors and Village Polices to better inform stakeholders about FBNMS and our management plan review process.

Numerous meetings were held with village stakeholders to collaborate and better inform management plan development. Meeting details (participants, time, date, and location) were confirmed through the OSA, and OSA identified initial meeting representatives. Village mayors, after consultation with the County Chiefs, ensured community participation at scheduled meetings. OSA commended the sanctuary on "the process that FBNMS has used to solicit village input for the review of its management plan and possible expansion..."



### Comments

Comments from the public are requested on both the draft management plan and proposed regulatory changes. All comments must be received by Friday, Jan. 6, 2012. Written comments should be sent by mail to:

Gene Brighthouse  
Superintendent, Fagatele Bay  
National Marine Sanctuary  
P.O. Box 4318  
Pago Pago, American Samoa,  
96799.

Comments may also be submitted electronically via the Federal eRulemaking Portal <http://www.regulations.gov> by clicking "Submit a Comment," then enter NOAA-NOS-2011-0243 in the keyword search. Locate the document you wish to comment on from the resulting list and click on the "Submit a Comment" icon on the right of that line.

### What are some of the benefits of the proposed plan?

The proposed plan will *directly benefit communities* and support the Samoan culture by establishing:

- A working group on Samoan cultural heritage
- Opportunities to promote traditional artisanal crafts and skills
- Volunteer tour guide training program for local residents
- Beaches maintenance in coastal areas adjacent to sanctuary units
- Distribution of results of sanctuary scientific activities
- Monitoring programs that involve the public and provide experience
- Sanctuary Visitor Center of American Samoa
- Increased outreach to communities in American Samoa and abroad
- Resource protection to address critical threats to the ocean
- Coordination among resource agencies organizations